

The Weekly Farbrengens



למען ישמעו • כי תצא תשפ"ה • 843
EDITOR - RABBI SHIMON HELLINGER

FEELING PROUD (III)

STRONG IDENTITY

The *chossid* Reb Michoel Teitelbaum once related:

My father, Reb Chaim Moshe, dealt in logs and would travel by train regularly. As a young boy, I accompanied him on one of these long trips. When the sun rose and it was time to *daven Shacharis*, my father took out his *tallis* and *tefillin* and began to prepare himself. The car was filled with noisy Russian peasants, but my father was completely oblivious to his surroundings. As he stood up to put on his *tallis*, the car suddenly fell silent. My father *davened* at his usual pace and during the entire time nobody spoke. As soon as he finished and sat down, the loud talking resumed. I of course shared my surprise with my father.

He later told me that when he first began travelling by train he consulted with the Rebbe Rashab. At that time it was dangerous for a *Yid* to travel by train since it was common for hooligans to throw Yidden out of the door as it was moving. My father asked the Rebbe if when he was *davening* on the train he should perhaps cover his *tallis* and *tefillin* with a coat and a hat. The Rebbe replied, "If you won't stand proud in your *Yiddishkeit*, of whom can we expect it?"

From that day on, my father *davened* on the train without embarrassment, and the *goyim* accordingly respected him for it.

(מפי השמועה)

In a *sicha* addressed to women, the Rebbe spoke about the importance of keeping separate by wearing distinctive clothing:

The *zechus* which enabled the Yidden to leave *Mitzrayim* was that the men and women held onto the Yiddishe way of dress, and were not influenced by the garb, nor by the behavior of the *mitzriyim* around them. Knowing that they were an *am echad*, it was self-understood that as Yidden, they should not lower themselves. For, does it make sense that just because a *mitzri* has decided to wear certain clothing, a *Yid* should copy him?! We can learn from this that we must not change

our dress in order to imitate others. The nations amongst whom we live will then respect us, for they will see that we stand by our principles, and through this we will be lead out of *golus*.

(לקו"ש ח"ח ע' 223)

CONSIDER

Why is finding common ground with secular society, quoting secular proofs and inviting a goyishe speaker expressions of a weak identity?

Is withstanding ridicule an easy test or a difficult one?

In a letter, the Rebbe stresses that since Yidden are a minority and are in danger of being influenced by their surroundings, effort must always be made to retain their Yiddishe identity. This is done by emphasizing positive Yiddishe traits and playing down the common ground with the *goyim* around them.

The Rebbe likewise bemoans the habit of those rabbis who use secular sources as proof of an idea, even when that idea is found in Torah sources. They imagine that this will impress the listeners, by demonstrating that they are well versed in secular literature and culture.

In a similar manner, at events in support of Yiddishe organizations, the Rebbe writes that emphasis should be placed on preserving Yiddishe values, instead of bringing a *goyishe* personality as a speaker or honored guest.

(היכל מנחם ח"ג ע' צד)

IGNORING SCOFFERS

Yehudah ben Teima said: "Be bold as a leopard, light as an eagle, swift as a deer, and strong as

a lion, to carry out the will of your Father in heaven." 'Bold as a leopard' means that one should not to be embarrassed by people who mock his service of *HaShem*. On the other hand, one should not respond with brazen words, so that he will acquire a brazen nature.

(אבות ה"ב, שו"ע ר' מהר"ק ס"א ס"ג)

The Rebbe pointed out that the beginning of the entire *Shulchan Aruch* is, "Al yeivosh mipnei hamal'igim" – do not be embarrassed by scoffers, for that is the basis for observing the whole of the *Shulchan Aruch*. Since it is recorded in the *Shulchan Aruch*, it has the status of an obligatory *halacha*.

(אג"ק ח"ו ע' שמ ועוד, לקו"ש חכ"א ע' 287)

The Frieddiker Rebbe writes: At the end of *galus*, before *Moshiach* comes, there are many who disturb and ridicule those who fear *HaShem*. This is very challenging, particularly when the scoffers are people whose only interest is to indulge in worldly pleasures, and they mock great scholars. However, *HaShem* gives people the power to prevail over them, even more than during the times of the *Beis HaMikdash*.

(סו"מ תש"ט ע' 118)

The Rebbe said: "Due to the weakness of the *neshamos* in our generation, *HaShem* has given us only one small test – to withstand ridicule. People today are afraid of being laughed at. Actually, what do you care if a fool will laugh at you? It should only confirm that whatever you've been doing is right, for they don't laugh at fools..."

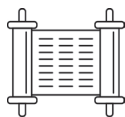
On the other hand, the Rebbe noted that since this can be quite a challenge, it is placed at the very beginning of the entire *Shulchan Aruch*.

(שיחור"ק תשל"ח ח"א ע' 295, תו"מ תשמ"ח ח"א ע' 246)

The Rebbe once remarked: "Some people make every effort to hide their meticulous observance of *mitzvos* out of fear that they will be dubbed a *farfrumter* (someone who is overly *frum*). Instead, one should observe his *mitzvos* publicly and disregard any scoffers."

(תו"מ ח"ח ע' 231)





MEZUZAH POSITION

What direction does the mezuzah need to be?

In discussing the position of the mezuzah on the doorway, the Gemara says that if it is placed "like a bolt" (*neger*), it is *possul*. But which direction is a bolt?

Rashi says that a bolt is horizontal, and therefore one should place the mezuzah vertically.¹ Rabbeinu Tam, however, writes that a bolt is vertical, as we find elsewhere that burying a human body vertically is disrespectful and is called the "burial of donkeys." Likewise, says Rabbeinu Tam, the Sefer Torah in the Aron Kodesh should be placed lying down, as it would be read.²

The Shulchan Aruch rules that a mezuzah should be affixed vertically. The Rama notes that since Tosfos disagrees, the meticulous place their mezuzos on an angle to be *yotzei* both opinions.³ This is not a "compromise," but rather both agree it is good, since a diagonal mezuzah is not "like a bolt" according to both understandings.⁴ It is only necessary to put the mezuzah at a slight angle.

If the doorpost is narrow, and there's no space to affix the mezuzah diagonally, it's preferable to affix it vertically on the doorpost within the airspace of the doorway than on the wall outside the doorway. Affixing it vertically within the outermost *tefach* also trumps affixing it at a slant, further into the doorway's space.⁵

The mezuzah is to be tilted towards the room, with its top facing the room, and its bottom facing outwards.⁶ If the doorpost doesn't even have room for a vertical mezuzah—e.g., the door fills the entire thickness of the doorway—and one is affixing the mezuzah at the side of the doorway in front, its top should be tilted toward the doorway.⁷

Consistent with the above debate, Sefardim place the Torah vertically, in the Aron Kodesh and during *kriah*, while Ashkenazim place it at an incline, both in the Aron Kodesh and on the *bimah*.

1. מנחות ל"ג ע"א. רש"י ד"ה איסורא.
2. תוס' שם ד"ה הא.
3. שו"ע ורמ"א ס' רפ"ט ס"ו.
4. חובת הדר פ"ט הע' כ. ובתוס' הנ"ל פ'.
5. פת"ש סק"ט-י. חובת הדר שם הע' כב.
6. תשובת המהר"ל בסוף הל' מזוזה.
7. פת"ש וחובת הדר שם.

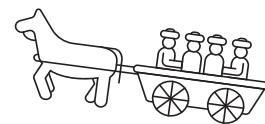
לע"נ מרת ציפא אסתר בת ר' שלום דובער ע"ה

DEDICATE AN ISSUE

in honor of a *simcha* or *yahrtzeit*

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Our Heroes



R. LEIB OF TURKISH MOGILOV

Little is known about the life of R. Leib, one of the earliest chassidim of the Alter Rebbe. We know that he lived in Mogilov, Ukraine, on the border with the Turkish Ottoman Empire (to differentiate it from the other Mogilov in White Russia).

When R. Mendel Horodoker and other leading chassidic figures traveled to Eretz Yisrael in 5537, the Alter Rebbe accompanied them until Mogilov. R. Leib met the Alter Rebbe at this time and became a chossid of his, traveling back to Liozna to study further with him. Many of the Alter Rebbe's early *maamorim* were published based on R. Leib's manuscripts, and he was the leader of the Chassidim in his area, who were distant from the Alter Rebbe's *chatzer*.

In his youth, R. Leib didn't take notice of the advance of Chassidus as he was deeply engrossed in Torah. However, when the Alter Rebbe, then just a student of R. Mendel Horodoker, stayed in his town and *paskened* a complex *shailah* in a wondrous manner, he posed his own dilemmas to him and became his chossid. He returned with the Alter Rebbe to Liozna, becoming one of his first chassidim, and he spent three years there.

When asked what he learned in that time, he said, "For forty years, I studied Torah *lishma*, and I thought only about Hashem and the Torah, but I never considered where I stand. In Liozna, I was shown how

a path to think about one's own spiritual state. And for three years, I worked on myself."

(ספר השיחות תרצ"ט ע' 336)

As a result of the R. Leib's teaching of Chassidus, one talented *yungerman* began to dedicate himself to the study of Chassidus and davening at length in the style of Chabad. His friends, who were chassidim of other Rebbes, taunted this *yungerman* and said that while his new Rebbe is surely great, miracles are only found by their Rebbe. The *yungerman* was pained by their words and he deliberated whether to tell R. Leib about it.

Several weeks later, a shliach from the Alter Rebbe delivering money to Eretz Yisroel visited their city, and he brought with him a letter for R. Leib about how to guide each of the Chabad *yungeleit*. Regarding this particular *yungerman* the Alter Rebbe wrote, "It is fit to draw him close, and is necessary to relieve his pain. This will be a sign for him and a miracle for others."

When the *yungerman* heard what the Alter Rebbe had written about him, he began to cry. When questioned, he related the conversation he had with his friends.

"Now I understand the Rebbe's words," said R. Leib, "Is there a greater miracle then to take a 'block of wood' and convert it into a *mentch*..."

(אגרות קודש רי"צ ח"ב ע' 441)

A Moment with The Rebbe

לזכר נשמת מרת חוה לאה בת ר' שמשון הכהן ע"ה



THE LEARNING AND DAVENING FEED OFF EACH OTHER

Reb Shlomo Zarchi relates:

As a bochur, I asked the Rebbe regarding thinking Chassidus before davening, what is preferred to think before davening: a specific *maamar* that is designated as a *maamar* to daven with, or the *maamar* that I was currently learning?

The Rebbe answered:

"Better think over the *maamar* that you are involved in."

And the Rebbe explained, "The purpose of thinking Chassidus before davening is so that the Chassidus infuses a *chayus* in the davening, and davening enlivens the Chassidus that you are learning." This would only be accomplished by contemplating the *maamar* I was studying.

Then the Rebbe added, "And every *maamar* can be applied in *avoda*."

(As heard from Reb Shlomo Zarchi)